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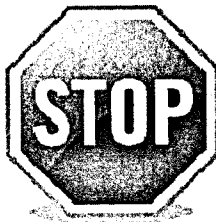
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# INSURGENCY

OR

## The Economic Power of the Middle Class

A Discussion between WM. Z. FOSTER, Member of the I. W. W. now in Europe, formerly Spokane Correspondent of "The Workingman's Paper", of Seattle, and the Editor, HERMON F. TITUS. Reprinted from that Journal, issue of September 10, 1910.

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# EDITORIAL BY H. F. TITUS

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(Reprinted from "The Workingman's Paper, issue of September 10, 1910.)

We welcome a letter like this from our old friend and correspondent, William E. Foster, better known by our readers as William Z. Foster. When he started for Spokane to represent this paper in the Fight for Free Speech in that city, it was thought his mail might go to some other man by the rather common name of William E., so it was agreed that his pen name for this paper should be William Z., and so by that initial he is known from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

Foster is now in Europe, this letter bearing a Paris postmark. He wants to study "Direct Action" in its home, France. He promises to write us occasionally and give the results of his investigations.

This letter shows once again what an able man Foster is. He is one of those wage-workers who put to shame the cavils of the so-called Intellectuals who imagine the working class is incapable of doing its own thinking.

\* \* \* \*

The issues which Foster takes with the position of "The Workingman's Paper" are (1) whether the Middle Class has sufficient "Economic Power" to resist the Trust Class, and (2), whether the Ballot can be used by the Working Class for its own emancipation.

First, as to Economic Power. That is an expression frequently employed without analysis to discover its actual meaning. It is often associated in thought with that similar expression, Economic Determinism. Both sound large and impressive and may be used to overwhelm an unsophisticated antagonist. It does one good to see a Capitalist adversary appear stupidly wise at the mention of one of these phrases by a really wise Proletarian.

But the wisest sometimes employ terms which have a profound significance, especially if they have won a vogue for themselves, in a loose and indefinite manner. Therefore it is always healthy for any thinker to analyze his most commonly used generalizations.

\* \* \* \*

For instance, it is a commonplace for Socialist writers to say the Feudal Class passed off the stage because Economic Power was captured in the course of development by the Capitalist Class; or that the Slave-owning Class of the South was forced to yield to the Capitalist Class of the North because it possessed inferior Economic Power.

Taking this out of the region of the clouds, what can it mean but the Power of Bread and Butter? That class has the greatest Economic Power which holds the purse strings; or, if all have purses, the one which has the

deepest and fullest purse, has the Power. This assumes that the Purse can purchase. If money cannot buy the necessities of life, the Purse is powerless. Economic Power, in that case, rests with that class which commands the Means of Production, the land and machinery by which necessities are produced through labor.

Take a strike, for example. The strikers can last as long as they can feed. When they can no longer get a meal or provide a roof, they die; their Economic Power was lost and life with it. The old South yielded and Lee surrendered, because there was nothing left in the treasury at Richmond, the soldiers were ragged and starving, no guns and no powder could be obtained, no cotton could be raised or sold, nobody could pay taxes; in a word, their Economic Power was exhausted; while yet the North had abundance.

\* \* \* \*

Now, have the Middle Class sufficient Economic Power left? Can the Trust Class starve them out? For the Middle Class are certainly on strike against the Trusts. Listen to their world-famous champion, Roosevelt's closing words at Minneapolis form a call to battle: "The supreme political task of our day, the indispensable condition of national efficiency and national welfare, is to drive the Special Corporate Interests out of our public life."

Compare the relative wealth of the three classes. According to the census of 1900, the last reliable figures, the Trust Class, with some quarter million members, owned 67 Billion Dollars worth of the wealth of the United States. The Middle Class, some 8½ millions of them, owned 24 Billion Dollars; while the Wage Class, over 20 Millions of them, had 4 Billions.

The question is, Can 67 Billion Dollars starve out 24 Billions? And another question, What chance has the Four Billion Dollar Wage Class against the combined Ninety-one Billion Dollar Capitalist Class?

But that bald statement of the case does not cover all the ground. For then the Wage Class would be utterly helpless, forever enslaved. And that is precisely the conclusion which some theorists, who follow their theories if they lead even into the ditch, have arrived at. The Proletarians have no Economic Power because they have no wealth. No historic class ever achieved its freedom without first achieving Economic Power, that is, Wealth. The modern Wage Class can get no wealth, therefore there is no hope for it.

\* \* \* \*

The reply made by some Proletarians is that the present Proletariat has real Economic Power, though it has not wealth. Its Power lies in its control of its own Labor Force, without which no wealth can be produced. They urge the argument that a United Proletariat, withholding its Labor Power from the Capitalist Class, would be able to paralyze that class. They could starve out the world by such "Direct Action."

But they would also starve out themselves meanwhile. The Capitalists, few in number, would be in possession of all the storehouses filled with provisions and could stand a long seige, while the workers would be without anything and millions of them. To this, the Direct Actionists reply: We will take and hold the Instruments of Production, the land, the factories, the railroads, where we are daily employed; we will continue to produce wealth,

only now for ourselves, no longer for the Capitalists. We will then have instituted the Cooperative Commonwealth. The Capitalists, who thought to starve us out, will be obliged to come to us at last and solicit us for a chance to live.

\* \* \* \*

That sounds good. But what would the Capitalists be doing while you are taking and holding? There are millions of them and they will fight for their property. Don't imagine that Teddy Roosevelt and General Wood and Admiral Dewey and Post and Heney and Hill and Gaynor and La Follette and the rest of their kind, are going to lie down and die like trapped rabbits. They are not made that way.

And they have the guns, never forget that. They have the guns. And modern guns are terribly deadly things. One man can hold up a thousand with one of these modern instruments of warfare. A hundred thousand men with Machine Guns can dislodge a million workmen, helpless, defenceless, at their industrial machines, in their factories which they are taking and holding.

The Economic Power of simple, unassisted, unarmed Labor Force, even if it could be united in a far greater degree than would ever be practicable, would be as unavailing against that vast development of power, called the Government, as hand labor has proved unavailing in its conflict with machine labor. The mere possession of Labor Power is obviously not the possession of Economic Power. It cannot produce the necessaries of life while excluded from the Means of Production.

\* \* \* \*

But is it true, on the other hand, that the possession of mere wealth, including the Means of Production, is the sure possession of Economic Power? Suppose Morgan held the entire wealth of America. Could he starve out all the rest of us? Ownership must be accompanied with power to maintain ownership. Could one man maintain possession against all the rest of mankind and compel them to starve because he would not admit them to the sources of life? If, then, one man would fall through weakness, how many men would be essential, with all the power of Government and Guns, to dispossess the rest of men and hold them dispossessed?

Could, for instance, the Trust Class, with its present numerical strength of, say, 250,000, forbid all the rest of the nation to touch the Means of Production which belong to that Class? They have the Economic Power, as defined above, but have they the physical power? Can 250,000 subdue 30,000,000? Can such a handful, even with the Gun Government, coerce a hundred times their number and starve them into submission?

\* \* \* \*

Granting that a whole nation could hardly be held up by a mere fraction of its number, like the Trust Class in America, how about such a large proportion as the Middle Class of some Ten Millions? Could they hold up the rest and compel them to deliver the goods?

That is the intensely practical question which faces the American nation today. Theodore Roosevelt is engaged in no child's play. He is in dead earnest to dethrone the "Predatory Interests," the Trusts, from their domi-

nation of the State. The Middle Class Rebellion has found a leader, as predicted in our editorial of April 10th, reprinted on our inside pages. He openly proposes Government Control of the Trusts, which can have no practical realization short of Government Ownership, as he plainly hints. This means the Railroads first, and then the Electric Trust and the Oil Trust and the Meat Trust and the Steel Trust, would be bought with Government bonds and hereafter conducted by the Government in such manner as to allow the small Business Man and the Farmer to live untroubled by high prices, high rates and high taxes; while the Wage Man would continue to work for wages as at present, provide a Surplus as at present and pay the interest on the bonds held by the Rockefellers, the Morgans and the Carnegies.

Can the Middle Class accomplish this program? Have they sufficient power, sufficient Economic Power, if you like?

The real question is, Can this Middle Class of Ten Millions, with its wealth of Twenty-four Billions, defeat the Trust Class of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand with its wealth of Sixty-seven Billions, including most of the Means of Production?

(The Wage Class is not yet politically organized, and therefore is a negligible quantity in formulating a reply to this question. For a while, at any rate, it will divide its votes between the Trust Class Party, promising Prosperity and good wages, and the Middle Class, promising steady work on Government Jobs. Gradually, we hope and believe, the Proletariat will perceive that neither Big Business nor Small Business, Trust Class nor Middle Class, has any intention to abolish wages and unpaid labor and the consequent poverty of the Proletarian, and will proceed to fight its own battle for its own emancipation.)

But let us essay a reply to the main question as to the ability of the Middle Class, under Roosevelt's leadership, to force the Corporations out of the control of the Government.

\* \* \* \*

And here we come to Foster's second difficulty, the Ballot. For it is by means of the Ballot, that the Middle Class Rebellion expects to succeed in displacing the Trust. A number of Wage Workers, including quite a section of the I. W. W., agree with Foster, when he says, "The Ballot is on the Bum," meaning that nothing can be accomplished by means of the Ballot, which is regarded by them as a Capitalist institution and a snare and a delusion.

Their contention is, that Economic Power is the only thing that counts. So, if the Middle Class wins at the Ballot Box, it will be defeated in the legislature itself and on the Judge's Bench and in the Executive's Chair, by the corrupting power of money in the hands of the Trusts; and they point to the universal prevalence of Graft as proof. They would not trust their own representatives, if elected, to prove inaccessible to the temptations of intrigue and bribery. In a word, they abjure Politics as a Device of the Enemy.

It is a fad among these workers to greet the mention of political action with Homeric Laughter and to consign the victim of political notions for the Working Class to the limbo of the totally ignorant and depraved. Even

to discuss the matter, as we are doing now, will seem to these men as little less than Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Their horror of political action is very like the anarchist's horror of "The State;" they would not touch it to save their lives.

\* \* \* \*

But nothing, not even the Law of Gravitation, is beyond discussion. Nor should the intolerance of its adherents lead us to refuse to consider any proposal which concerns the Workingclass.

Let us see. The Middle Class proposes to down the Trust Class by means of the Ballot, notwithstanding the alleged superior Economic Power of the Trusts. Are they foredoomed to failure?

Let us say at the outset that all this cheap ridicule of the Ballot as "a piece of white paper" cannot pass with the thoughtful. You might as well ridicule all voting, as the anarchists do—in theory; that is, Never try in any manner to ascertain the will of the majority.

It is just as stupid to take a vote in an assembly by show of hands, or by ayes and noes, as it is to do it by means of the ballot.

The "Piece of Paper" is nothing in itself, but as indicating the will and opinion of a man or woman, a unit in a given society, whose decision is to be ascertained, it is a very potent fact.

It is no modern invention. It is as old as the ancient Commune. It existed long before Capitalism, Feudalism or Slavery was known on the earth. You might as well decry the wearing of Cotton Clothes as a device of Capital, or the use of Petroleum or the Steamboat or the study of Chemistry. Because Capitalists employ Robert's Rules of Order does not prove that they are not good rules for any assembly.

A fact is a fact, and the Ballot is a very prominent fact in the modern economy. By means of the Ballot this week, the Trust Senator Burrows of Michigan has been retired from the U. S. Senate, and La Follette has been re-nominated in Wisconsin. "Insurgent" victories are recorded all over the country—by means of the Ballot.

Why this tremendous struggle between the Standpatters and Insurgents now going on in every state, if the Ballot is not a powerful factor in deciding events? It seems absurd to have to prove so obvious an assertion as that the Ballot is a tremendous fact.

\* \* \* \*

The Ballot certainly changes the Government. By means of it the Middle Class can achieve power. It is altogether likely they will win the elections this fall.

But will Government make up for lack of Economic Power? Will not the superior wealth of the Trust Class enable them to defeat the Government in the hands of the Middle Class? Just as the Capitalist Class might defeat the Wage Class, even after its victory at the polls?

We admit we cannot understand how it will be possible for a quarter of a million people, though they may be in possession of 67 Billion Dollars of Property, to prevent ten million people who have won the powers of Government, from passing and enforcing any legislation they please. The only way we can see for the Trust Class to maintain itself under those conditions, would be to fight, to engage in actual war in defence of their prop-



erty. In which event, they would stand no show against the Ten Million who were in possession of the mighty machine of repression known as the Government.

\* \* \* \*

For the Government, the State, the thing which is changed by means of the Ballot at Elections, is an almost superhuman engine of power. For generations it has been trained in the exercise of power. It is a vast social machine for applying coercion. It is itself an Economic Power, a physical power which, in the hands of a large minority, like the ten million of the Middle Class, might be able to coerce and conquer the twenty million Proletarians. By means of the Ballot, the Middle Class can capture this Economic Power, the Instrument of Physical Control, the Means of Producing Death, the historically developed Machine of Government, and thereby prolong its own existence as a Capitalist Class. Then it will be far more likely to defer the Emancipation of the Wage Class indefinitely than the numerically and physically weak Trust Class.

\* \* \* \*

Therefore we regard the Middle Class Rebellion as a thing to be combated unremittingly by the Wage Class. We can see no possible way in which the Proletarian can be benefitted by the victory of Roosevelt and Pinchot. It is better that Taft and Hill and Morgan and Guggenheim should carry on their Trust Organization to the limit, wiping out the Middle Class completely. Meanwhile, the Wage Class is just as well off, certainly, during the progress of the Battle between Big Capital and Little Capital, under the management of Big Capital as it would be under Little Capital.

Any kind of Capital is the Foe of Labor. Any kind of Capital, big or little, is the robber of Wage Labor. It is the very nature of Capital to live off the Surplus of Labor's product over its subsistence wage. Abolish that Surplus, abolish the Law of Wages, and you abolish Capital. Nothing short of that will emancipate Wage Labor. And we have no consideration whatsoever for any other class in society but the Wage Class. Their battle is the Battle for Freedom, for Democracy, for Progress, for a New Race. Proletarianism is the only Nationalism worth fighting for.

# W. Z. FOSTER'S LETTER

On Board North German-Lloyd Steamer Prinz Friedrich Wilhelm, bound for Cherbourg, France.

Aug. 6, 1910.

Mr. E. B. Ault.

Dear Friend and Fellow Worker:—  
For the past few months I have been knocking around so much that I have had very little time for reading, and many of the articles in my old friend, "The Socialist," have escaped my notice. In New York, however, I was handed a late issue and during a few spare moments I read the article entitled "The Middle Class Rebellion." I judge from the style of it that Dr. Titus is the author.

\* \* \*

The American political situation has been summed up from every political angle and prejudice, but of all of these efforts that I have seen I believe "The Middle Class Rebellion" is by far the best, and, barring a few conclusions as to the part to be played by the workers and the possible outcome of the fight I agree with it. In it the leading political figures of the day, such as Roosevelt, Taft, Ballinger, Pinchot, etc., are properly pigeonholed in the economic classes they represent, and the class nature of the struggle now going on is clearly exposed.

\* \* \*

The current explanations that the muck raking graft exposures, etc., now filling our popular magazines, are due to a moral wave that is

sweeping over the country, or to the re-awakening of the "inherent" sense of justice of the American people which has hibernated for the past two decades, are absurd, and unworthy of the serious consideration of any student of sociology. As Dr. Titus says these phenomena are the result of "the revolt of Little Business against Big Business."

\* \* \*

In the I. W. W. it is customary for writers and speakers to almost completely ignore the Middle Class. Any reference made to it is usually as a slur at its weakness and backwardness. No attempt is made to point out that present society is a three class society, with two economically inferior classes—Working Class and Middle Class—desperately resisting the inroads of the Master or Capitalist Class. With a sublime contempt for the great, reactionary, Middle Class we consider that it is already eliminated as an important factor in the struggle for economic power. All political activity we attribute to the Capitalist Class; the violent political quarrels, of late agitating the country, are but so many subterfuges and schemes to divide and bewilder the only other class worth mentioning—the Working Class. Roosevelt, Taft, Aldrich, Cannon, Pinchot, etc., are just so many capitalist politicians. A favorite expression is, "There are but two 'nations'—the robber and the robbed."

This position is manifestly wrong, and misleading, as the Middle Class is yet to be reckoned with, and all indications point to a great struggle between it and the Capitalist Class proper for mastery. This warfare, now just getting well under way, contains a large element of danger to the American labor movement, in that the Middle Class, although possessing no interests in common with the Working Class, represents all the historic ideals the raw and undeveloped Working Class have been bred to consider as their own.

The American ideal has been to evolve to affluence through the medium of the Middle Class by first becoming a small farmer, storekeeper or manufacturer, etc. Now, when the Middle Class, figuratively the second rung on the ladder to success, finds itself being strangled by the Capitalist Class it makes a desperate appeal for aid to the Working Class, which readily responds, naturally supposing it is interested in the "square deal," "anti-rebate," "conservation," etc., policies of the Middle Class, as they represent the last remnant of the historic American slogan of "Equal opportunity for all." As proof that this aid is being extended to the Middle Class the late victories of the insurgents may be cited, to say nothing of the hopelessly Middle Class character of the so-called "Socialist" party.

\* \* \*

The sooner this struggle is over the better it will be for the Working Class, as the economic subjugation of the Middle Class means the destruction of their individualist ideals—with which the Working Class is now obsessed, and the development of the new Working Class Collectivist ideals, without which the labor movement is almost useless. So long as a

worker believes that by "saving up" for a few years he can become the owner of a lucrative business he is absolutely unfit to be organized; but when that hope is removed and he understands that he can better his condition only by acting in concert with his fellow workers, then the days of Capitalism are numbered.

\* \* \*

Dr. Titus points out the hastiness of considering as a cancelled economic factor such a good fighting class as the American Middle Class has proved itself to be, and suggests the possibility that under the leadership of the fire eating Roosevelt and Pinchot, it may severely check the growth of the monopolies, and "indefinitely postpone" the overthrow of capitalism. So strong does he word this possibility that one would be led to believe that he expects events to take such a course. This would mean government ownership of railroads, telegraphs, coal mines, express companies and other monopolies that particularly harass the Middle Class.

Does modern American history justify any such faith in the power of the Middle Class, to, in any way, even check the concentration of capital? Does it not, on the other hand, clearly prove that the Middle Class is doomed, that its old means for the control of industry are obsolete, and that it is incapable of developing any new ones, that in spite of its vast numerical strength and seeming virility, its intellectual following and its possession of the historic American ideals—an invaluable asset to a ruling class—it is about to be obliterated?

\* \* \*

This "Middle Class Rebellion,"—tho rendered acute by the Pinchot-Balinger controversy and the rebuke administered to Cannon recently—has

been going on with increasing vigor for the past ten years. We have seen the trusts increase their power continually in spite of all opposition until today they are almost all powerful. It is folly to say the Middle Class hasn't disputed this advance; but it has always been defeated. Several times running victories have been won but only for a time, the Capitalist Class has always emerged the victor.

The Northern Securities case is a good example. Here was a trust that was legally busted and yet today the merger is in practical effect by the simple expedient of keeping three sets of books instead of one. The Standard Oil Co. \$29,000,000 fine was another great victory for the Common People. At the time of the imposition of the fine any newsboy could have told us that it would never be paid. Is there any sane person who believes the rebate and graft prosecutions have decreased the practices? The railroad officials and legislators have simply become more expert in covering up their trails.

\* \* \*

Once in a while a trust gets so "bad" that the "people" decide to buy it—for instance the Chicago City Railways—but somehow the capitalists refuse to sell. Instead of selling public utilities to the state or municipalities the tendency is to buy up what few gas works, water-works, etc., the municipalities now own. The Phila. Gas Works was sold to the U. G. I. Co. in spite of the express decision at the previous election that it should not be sold. Even the public ownership of the post office is now threatened.

\* \* \*

The cause for the uniform lack of success on the part of the Middle Class through its government is clearly be-

cause it is lacking in economic power, tho it has time and again demonstrated the fact that it has an abundance of the obsolete "political power." There is one kind of power recognized in the world today, and that is the ability to control industry. This is an economic power. This power is shared by the capitalists and the workers almost entirely, the former thru their capital, the latter thru the monopoly of their labor power. In these later days armaments are more and more dependent upon capital owing to the increased expenditure necessary for their maintenance and the success of a war depending upon the goodwill of the capitalists who loan the necessary funds.

\* \* \*

The Middle Class although possessing a vast amount of wealth is unable to use it effectively owing to its being divided among so many individuals. As for controlling industry by its labor power, such a thing is absurd, as they are not in a position to do so.

It can't command the armed forces of the nation, as that too has paid homage to the all conquering capital. The Middle Class thus stands stripped of all economic power.

Until quite recently the small capitalists, or Middle Class, controlled industry through their "democratic" government, which came into existence with them. Being economic equals and very numerous their method of procedure was to ascertain the sentiment of the majority by an election, and then to coerce the minority into obedience. No small set of the capitalists at that time could pit their capital, or economic strength against the rest, and as a consequence, the wish of the majority was law, and no mercy was shown the violator.

Not being exposed to so many cor-

rupting influences the courts and legislatures could be depended upon to serve the class that elected or appointed them and the will of the majority was respected. Then was the heyday of "government" and most of the brilliant men of the period could be found in the halls of Congress.

\* \* \*

But times have changed; capital has combined, the trusts have arisen, and the owners, though few in numbers are able to easily thwart the wishes of the small capitalists by a liberal use of their money. Their capital is in such shape that they can make it count in a fight—witness how easily they suppress Trade Unions that were the terror of the small capitalists.

No longer do they obey the wishes of the majority. As Lawson says, "They buy legislators like fish in the market." They have corrupted the courts, the very soul of Middle Class government, until they are a byword even to the Middle Class. The government has become a joke and is composed of a lot of nobodies. The only real use the modern capitalist class has for it is to use it to exploit the "common people" of their rapidly dwindling possessions, such as franchises, water power, coal lands, etc.

\* \* \*

Being few in numbers this new Capitalist Class needs no vast executive committee or "government" such as the Middle Class does, but transacts its business privately, behind closed doors. If the Beef Trust wishes to arrange for railroad rates, a meeting in Morgan's private office settles the matter satisfactorily. Why allow a lot of Kansas farmers to interfere thru their busybody "government?" It is a very significant fact that when a kick is made about unfair rates it

is always by the Middle Class and to its government. The Trusts settle their disputes privately, except in rare cases, when they make open economic war upon each other. They treat the laws of the Middle Class government with contempt whenever it suits their convenience.

\* \* \*

The Baseball syndicate is in existence in flagrant violation of many of the most fundamental laws upon the statute books.

This syndicate has absolutely banished business competition from baseball and each club is "in its narrow cell forever laid." It forces contract labor upon its employees and woe unto the ball player who is hardy enough to violate his contract. He is openly blacklisted by every club in the country.

This syndicate has a high court of three men who try owners, managers, and players alike, dealing out severe punishments when they deem it necessary. The magnates argue expediency, they rightly argue that shopkeepers should not be allowed to interfere with baseball. The only power they will ever recognize will be the organized labor power of the ball players, or a rival aggregation of capital. Many similar instances can be given of this evidence of each industry transacting its business regardless of the howls of the smaller fry.

\* \* \*

The modern Capitalist Class absolutely refuses to obey any "law" detrimental to its interest that is not enforced by economic power. The so-called labor laws, such as "8 hour laws," "child labor laws," etc., are treated the same as are the "pure and simple" Middle Class measures, as it realizes they have nothing behind

them but the old Middle Class counting of noses, or voting.

\* \* \*

There are many ways of side-tracking the wishes of the "common people," but they are all based on capital. Courts and legislatures have always proved purchasable and investigating committees are easily disposed of. Even in the sacred ranks of the ultra holy insurgents the power of capital is evident. Garfield, several years ago, reported that the Beef Trust, one of the "very bad" ones paid but 2 per cent interest on the money invested and the Roosevelt-Morton rebate scandal stunk to the high heavens.

\* \* \*

This disregard and contempt for "majority" made law, tho a pronounced characteristic of the revolutionary Capitalist Class is not peculiar to it alone. The revolutionary Working Class also ignores obnoxious "majority" made laws wherever it has the power to do so. The workers have organized in restraint of trade in spite of Middle Class conspiracy laws until now they have the "legal" right to organize. Needless to say this "legal" right is worth nothing if the Capitalist Class has the economic power to forbid it. Many of the labor unions of Europe are in flagrant violation of the "law." Even our own Spokane fight may serve to "adorn a moral or point a tale" as that was successfully carried on in open violation of "law."

\* \* \*

In the three cornered fight now going on in society, the two revolutionary classes have thrown aside the old Middle Class government—owing to a lack of organization, the Working Class hasn't repudiated it to the ex-

tent that the Capitalist Class has—and settle their quarrels between themselves; and the reactionary class, the Middle Class, buffeted from pillar to post, and gradually being squeezed to death between the upper and the nether millstone, can only defend itself with its old obsolete weapon—Government, which its real enemy, the Capitalist Class, ignores.

The Middle Class can't understand this phenomenon of a few men handling its government and proposes to cleanse the temple of the money changers by electing "good" and "honest" men into office, who will make their good "ship of state" answer the helm as she used to. In order to secure as many of these virtuous paragons who are exempt from the first law of nature, the Working Class is also to be lined up and such a counting of noses made as never occurred before.

\* \* \*

Herein lies the chief fault of Dr. Titus' article. He seems to think such a reactionary program can be effective in checking economic development.

The key to the situation does not lie with the workers. It is not a working class fight and the workers will never take any very serious part in it. They will probably use the Middle Class weapon—the weak and ineffective ballot—in this Middle Class fight but it is extremely unlikely that they will ever fight another's battles with real Working Class weapons that are revolutionary such as the strike, sabotage, etc. Far from being an important factor they will be but an imposing array of dead timber and the Capitalist Class will ignore even the greatly increased number of opposing noses and buy up the legislators and judges of this unholy alliance the same

as before, tho perhaps at a slightly higher price.

The only hope the Middle Class has is to defeat the Capitalist Class with capital, and if this could be done, simply the personel of the Capitalist Class would be changed and there would be a still greater concentration of capital.

\* \* \*

The danger of this fight to the workers is that they are certainly going to experiment with the ballot to the neglect of their revolutionary economic organizations. These latter, however, can never die, tho their immediate development may be seriously interfered with, because while the workers are flirting with the seductive and barren ballot, they will be forced to retain some sort of bread and butter organization, or accept a greatly lowered standard of living.

\* \* \*

When the ineffectiveness of the ballot has finally been demonstrated so clearly that even the workers can see it, then they will repudiate it entirely, and adopt Working Class tactics, even as the tendency seems to be in the vanguard of the labor movement of Europe. This will be the death blow to the already sadly weakened Middle Class and the open-

ing of the real "direct action" fight between the Capitalist Class and the Working Class. For the first time in capitalist history the issue will be clear and then the Revolution will be at hand.

Thus it will be seen that the Middle Class can look for no real-aid from the Working Class. Tho the latter will undoubtedly vote as the former directs, the combined vote will be just as easily ignored as the majority vote of today. The Working Class will have its direct action tactics to turn to after learning this lesson, but the Middle Class must go down and out owing to inability to develop effective weapons of offense and defense.

\* \* \*

Harry, I think you fellows should get next to the ballot—its on the bum entirely. I don't presume to know a great deal about direct action but at present writing, I am on my way to a country where I should learn a little namely, France.

But I have made this letter so long that I have left no room for news. I'll write you occasionally, however, and give you what little news there is when I get settled.

Yours for the Working Class,

Per the I. W. W.,

WM. "Z." FOSTER.

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